

Weaponization of Rohingya Citizenship - How Successive Administrations Have Denied Citizenship Rights to the Rohingya

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Abstract

The current crisis affecting the Rohingya people stems from a long process of legal denial by Burma/Myanmar authorities. Once entitled to full citizenship rights in a newly independent Burma, the Rohingya had their status degraded since the military coup of 1962 to become vulnerable to all sorts of abuse. Allegations of serious violations of human rights including ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, sexual violence, and mass executions remain internally unaddressed owing to the stateless status officially imposed on the Rohingya. The weaponization of citizenship in Burma/Myanmar not only makes the Rohingya vulnerable and invisible, but also works to keep perpetrators from prosecution. However, while legal remedies remain domestically unreachable, alternative routes do exist for the international community to fill in this judicial gap. This study is based on two years of extensive literature review concerning the weaponization of citizenship against the Rohingya people and the prospects for legally addressing alleged violations. By applying the process-tracing methodology this article looks into the general legal exclusion as described by Melissa Crouch, and further highlights the involvement of international courts in the pursuit of justice and accountability for the Rohingya.